

REMARKS

Claims 12, 14, 15, and 16 are in the application, of which Claims 12 and 14 are independent. Claim 12 has been amended herein. Claims 15 and 16 have been newly added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Entry of the February 21, 2007 Second Amendment After Final Rejection is respectfully requested. The changes made herein are in addition to those made in that Amendment.

Initially, Applicants note that they have not yet received an acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority. In this regard, a certified copy of the foreign priority application was submitted in parent Application No. 09/988,873, on March 4, 2002. Acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority is respectfully requested.

Claims 11 to 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,312,906 (Cass). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

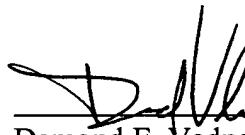
Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during the personal interview conducted on March 8, 2007. During the interview, the Examiner tentatively agreed that the claim changes made in the Second Amendment After Final Rejection would overcome the outstanding rejection over Cass.

The Examiner also indicated that the Second Amendment After Final Rejection raises new issues requiring further consideration and/or search, and as such, that it would be necessary to file an RCE to have the Amendment entered. Accordingly, an RCE is being filed concurrently herewith.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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